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## SF DPH CHECKLIST: DIAGNOSIS AND MANAGEMENT OF WOUND BOTULISM

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### Diagnosis

- Establish the presence of signs and symptoms consistent with the acute symmetric descending flaccid paralysis of botulism. *Did the symptoms begin with cranial nerve palsies (ptosis, diplopia, dysarthria, dysphagia), followed by descending weakness of the neck, upper extremities, respiratory muscles and lower extremities?*
- If the diagnosis is in doubt, consider an infectious diseases consult, a neurology consult, and/or EMG testing which should show augmentation of muscle action potentials on repetitive stimulation. .
- Determine if the patient has risk factors for wound botulism. *Is the patient an injecting drug user, especially a person who skin-pops black tar heroin?*
- Look for infected wound(s). Some patients with wound botulism may not have an obvious site of infection.

### Obtaining antitoxin

- Call the San Francisco Department of Public Health, Communicable Disease Control Unit at **(415) 554-2830**, after hours follow the prompts to page the on-call physician. Provide clinical information supporting diagnosis of botulism. SFDPH will then contact CDCPH to discuss release of antitoxin if indicated.
- Receive a call from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Division of Communicable Disease Control Duty Officer (DCDC DOD) who will discuss the case and release of antitoxin. (Note: the state's DCDC DOD should not be contacted directly from the hospital initially.)
- Alert the hospital pharmacy that antitoxin is being released from the quarantine station.
- Arrange for the transport of antitoxin (the admitting hospital is responsible for transport).

### REQUIRED specimen collection

- Specimen **MUST** be collected **BEFORE** administration of antitoxin.
- Draw **30 cc's of whole blood into red top tubes** (this will take more than one tube).
- Label each tube with the patient's name, "pre-antitoxin serum," and the date and time of collection.
- Indicate if the patient is taking any of the following medications which will interfere with and delay results of testing: neostigmine bromide, neostigmine methyl sulfate, pyridostigmine bromide, mestinon/timespan (used in tensilon test), ambenonim chloride.
- Send the tubes to the hospital laboratory packaged together with instructions for the lab to refrigerate and ship to: **San Francisco Public Health Laboratory, 101 Grove Street, Room 412, San Francisco, CA 94102, (415) 554-2800.**

### Antitoxin administration

- Test the patient for sensitivity to antitoxin and administer antitoxin according to the instructions in the antitoxin packet.

### Wound debridement

- Debride the patient's wound(s) if any. (CDPH recommends hanging antitoxin prior to wound debridement.)
- Consider high-dose antibiotics effective against anaerobes.

### Other considerations

- Consider vaccination against tetanus if not up to date.